

Opening of the room dedicated to *Ligustro* at the public library *Leonardo Lagorio* – Imperia (Italy)

Piazza Edmondo De Amicis, 7 - Imperia

On 9th May 2015, at the **public library *Leonardo Lagorio*** of the city of Imperia, with the sponsorship of the **Italy Japan Foundation** and **Foundation Mario Novaro**, took place the opening of the room dedicated to the master Giovanni Berio, alias **LIGUSTRO** as a goal following the important donation (*crafted woods, correspondence, Japanese calligraphies, books and artworks, a complete archive of an entire life dedicated to art*) of Ligustro to the city of Imperia. The room is usable from the community, as a point of excellence, to consult all the donated material for personal in-depth analysis and follow up meetings.

Giovanni Berio, who works under the pseudonym of Ligustro, was born in Imperia (Italy) in 1924. Since 1986 he has dedicated himself exclusively to the study of Japanese coloured woodblock printing and the Nishiki-e techniques in use during the Edo period (1603-1868), creating hand-prints on highly prized paper produced in Japan using traditional craft methods. Ligustro Nishiki-e technique consists in having, for each print, many woods that will be printed one by one. For this reason, there could be some print with the same drawing but with different colours. Those colors are obtained thanks to the mix of different powders and leaves of silver and gold, powder of pearls, fragments of mica, grinded oyster shells (in Japanese gofun), colored ground and other methods that he created. He is known and appreciated all over the world, especially by Japanese, English and Italian experts.

[...]Ligustro's prints create an artistic world where the muse plays the harp. Look at their immediate grace; I will not be alone in becoming drunk on this pure beauty. If I may borrow a saying from the ancient Chinese, these engravings are pleasant places in an enchanted country, meeting places ineffably distilled. Fundamentally different to the Japanese woodcuts, they throw new light on modern engraving and at the same time the product of marvellous poetry. [...] Prof. Fukuda Kazuhiko

[...]No colour reproduction can do justice to the original, either in the brilliance of the metallic gold and silver overlays or the blind printing that is used for embossing. [...]Always, in his prints, there is this kind of unexpected poetry, expressed in colour woodblocks of incredible accomplishment. There are unique among modern graphics. [...] The world is now bad, and we need something bright and hopeful, like your prints. [...]There have been numbers of western artists who have attempted to make woodblocks colour-prints – Henry Rivière and John Platt for instance – but none has approached Ligustro's mastery of the complexities of cutting and printing techniques Jack Hillier

